

DOCUMENTED BRIEFING

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Reserve Component Linguists in Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations

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*Prepared for the
United States Army*

Arroyo Center

PREFACE

This documented briefing reports on the final results of a quick-response study on the availability of linguists in the Army's Reserve Components. It contains material that was given in briefing format to the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, the JFK Special Warfare Center, and the U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command.

The study was undertaken at the request of the Commanding General, U.S. Army Special Operations Command. The research was conducted in the Manpower and Training Program of RAND's Arroyo Center, a federally funded research and development center sponsored by the United States Army.

SUMMARY

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Reserve Components (RC) supply 95 percent of the Army's wartime capability in civil affairs (CA) and 75 percent in psychological operations (PSYOP). While fairly well manned in terms of total personnel, these units are far short of the required number of linguists. In 1995, less than 10 percent of the RC language requirements in CA and PSYOP units could have been met with personnel possessing even elementary proficiency.

To determine why this shortfall developed, the analysis discussed in this briefing looked into the retention, proficiency, and utilization of RC linguists in CA and PSYOP units.

WHAT WE LEARNED

- **The shortage does not result from recruiting or retention problems.**

The results indicated that overall manning was over 90 percent and that the retention of linguists serving in positions requiring language proficiency was above 80 percent. This is quite high for the RC, 10 to 20 percentage points above that normally seen in USAR units.

- **Nor does it result from a lack of proficiency.**

The data also indicated that over 40 percent of the linguists met the limited working proficiency standard and over 80 percent maintained elementary proficiency levels.

- **But too few receive initial language training.**

The lack of agreement on language requirements and a shortage of initial training opportunities have led to a persistent shortfall in linguists.

- **And trained linguists are not used efficiently.**

In addition, many trained linguists are not being used in appropriate positions. Less than half of them serve in positions requiring foreign language proficiency, and less than 10 percent are assigned to positions requiring their specific language.

- **Shifting requirements appear to be the primary cause of overall shortages and poor utilization.**

Substantial changes in language requirements, both in terms of the overall number and the mix of languages required, were found to be a major factor in the discrepancy between requirements and capability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Two actions are needed as first steps to a more effective and efficient language program for CA and PSYOP and to provide the empirical basis for future policy choices. First, there must be a clearly articulated policy for determining language requirements based upon CA and PSYOP mission-related objectives. An explicit tie between the language-proficiency requirements and the mission objectives they are meant to support is key to assessing language needs and then developing effective and efficient initial and sustainment language training programs.

Second, policies and procedures must be developed to ensure that language-proficiency requirements and personnel capabilities are correctly and promptly posted in the appropriate data systems. Such information is needed to manage language training and utilization of linguists effectively. It also helps indicate when a policy change might be warranted and provides the empirical basis for policy choices.

GLOSSARY

AE	Egyptian
AOR	Area of Responsibility
AZ	Arabic
CA	Civil Affairs
CINC	Commander in Chief
CG	Commanding General
CM	Chinese Mandarin
CZ	Czech
DLAT	Defense Language Aptitude Test
DLI	Defense Language Institute
DU	Dutch
FAS	Force Accounting System
FR	French
GM	German
JFKSWCS	John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School
JN	Japanese
KP	Korean
LA	Spanish (American)
MOS	Military Occupational Specialty
PF	Farsi
PL	Polish
POG	Psychological Operations Group
PQ	Portuguese
PSYOP	Psychological Operations
RC	Reserve Component

RU	Russian
SIDPERS	Standard Installations/Division Personnel System
TA	Tagalog
TH	Thai
UR	Urdu
USACAPOC	US Army Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations Command
USAR	US Army Reserve
USASOC	US Army Special Operations Command

Reserve Component Linguists in Civil Affairs & Psychological Operations

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This briefing summarizes the results of a special-assistance project on Reserve Component linguists, conducted by the RAND Arroyo Center at the request of the Commanding General, U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC). The study was conducted between November 1995 and January 1996.

USASOC was concerned about the large number of linguists required for various wartime operations, compared with the relatively small number of personnel who seemed to be available. Because the causes of the problem were not apparent, the USASOC commander asked the Arroyo Center to look into it, focusing on the retention, proficiency, and utilization of RC linguists in Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations units.

Background

RC is key to Army CA and PSYOP capability

- 95 % of CA and 75 % of PSYOP in Army is in the RC
- Deployed in most recent operations

Overall manning of RC in CA and PSYOP is adequate but far short in number of linguists

- Less than 10 % of language requirement met with linguists possessing current test scores of 1/1 or better

Is shortfall in qualified linguists result of retention problems, inability to maintain proficiency, or poor utilization of trained personnel?

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The Reserve Components (RC) furnish essential elements of the Army wartime capability in two important types of Army units: civil affairs (CA) and psychological operations (PSYOP). Of the 5,158 personnel in the CA wartime structure, only 208 (5 percent) are in the active component; the remaining 95 percent come from the RC. In PSYOP units, a somewhat greater proportion of the capability resides in the active component (1,137 out of a total of 4,735), but that still leaves 75 percent who come from the RC. Even in recent small operations that were far short of a major contingency or general war—Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti, and Bosnia—the Army needed and used Reserve Component civil affairs and psychological operations personnel.

Manning rates for both CA and PSYOP exceed rates for the RC as a whole, with SIDPERS data for FY 1995 showing overall RC manning of nearly 100 percent in CA and 75 percent in PSYOP units.¹ However, manning of language requirements is much lower. While foreign language proficiency is required for 35 percent of the CA positions and 42 percent of PSYOP RC positions, less than 7 percent of the RC personnel assigned to these units had a language code recorded in SIDPERS. As a result, less than 20 percent of the language-required positions could be filled with a linguist.²

¹SIDPERS (Standard Installation/Division Personnel System) is the Army's automated personnel data system.

²This has not changed significantly over the last five years. For example, according to a August 1991 JFKSWCS briefing, there were 851 language-coded positions in PSYOP and

Clearly, even if all of the linguists were trained and fully proficient in a needed language (and all are not, as we will see), and even if all were assigned to a position requiring a language (again, all are not), a significant shortfall of trained linguists would still remain. According to data presented in a training briefing given by unit commanders in 1995, their units could man less than 10 percent of the language-required positions with personnel who had scored 1/1 or better within the past year in a required language.³

Thus, by these measures it would appear that meeting wartime language requirements is a significant problem in the RC elements of CA and PSYOP. What causes the problem? The shortfall could result from a number of factors: poor retention of trained linguists, linguists unable to maintain qualification, poor utilization of qualified linguists, inability to recruit and train sufficient numbers of linguists, or some combination of such factors.

1,313 in CA in 1991. There were 147 and 278 assigned linguists respectively, or about 20 percent of the required number.

³There are eleven proficiency levels (0, 0+, 1, 1+, 2, 2+, 3, 3+, 4, 4+, and 5, with 0 denoting no proficiency and 5 indicating functionally native proficiency) used to measure language proficiency in listening, reading, and speaking. A score of 1/1 indicates only elementary proficiency in both listening and reading.

Purpose

Provide the results of a quick look at RC linguists in civil affairs and psychological operations with respect to

- **Their retention, proficiency, and utilization**
- **The underlying language requirements**

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This briefing discusses the results of our look into questions about the retention, proficiency, and utilization of RC linguists in CA and PSYOP units. The purpose of the study was to take a quick look at the issues rather than carry out a longer, more comprehensive analysis. At the initial visit to Fort Bragg in November 1995 to meet with the POC and determine the questions and issues being raised, it was agreed that the study would be completed by the end of January. This briefing documents the results of our analysis.

The study approach included visits, interviews, and analysis of personnel data from the Army SIDPERS database. Site visits and personnel interviews were conducted at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center & School (JFKSWCS), US Army Special Operations Command (USASOC), U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (USACAPOC), 4th Psychological Operations Group (4th POG), Defense Language Institute (DLI), and the Monterey Institute for International Studies. Personnel data for FY93, 94, and 95 were obtained from the SIDPERS database for RC personnel assigned to CA and PSYOP units. We used these data to examine the retention of personnel, their language proficiency, and the underlying language requirements for the positions they were assigned to. We also obtained requirements data from the Army Force Accounting System (FAS) for total requirements and from USASOC for language requirements.

Briefing Outline

Purpose

Background

Analysis

- Retention
- Proficiency
- Utilization
- Language Requirements

Observations and Conclusions

Recommendations

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The remainder of the briefing will present the results of our analysis of four specific issues about Army linguists in the reserve components of CA and PSYOP: retention, proficiency, utilization, and requirements. We end by presenting two recommended actions.

Retention of Linguists Is Above Average

	<u>FY94</u>	<u>FY95</u>
Civil Affairs		
• Overall	78 %	72 %
• Linguists	82 %	78 %
• Linguists in language required position	93 %	83 %
PSYOP		
• Overall	68 %	69 %
• Linguists	71 %	77 %
• Linguists in language required position	88 %	80 %

Note: For USAR overall, retention ran about 70% for these years

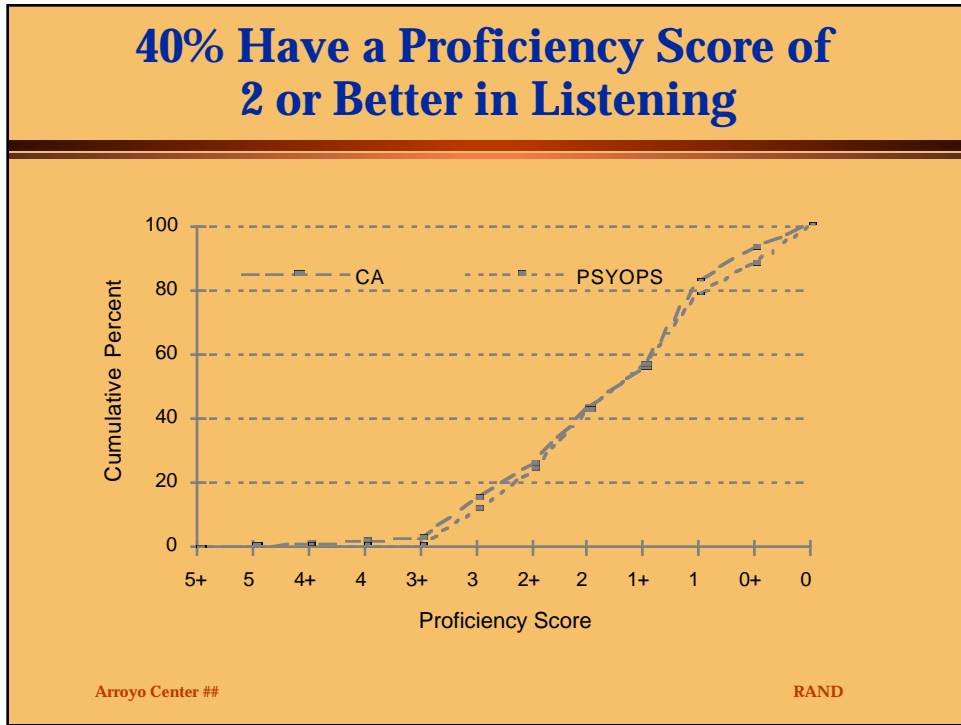
For MI linguists in USAR, retention was 78 % (FY94) & 67 % (FY95)

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We measured retention by looking at the personnel reflected in the SIDPERS data files for end FY 1993, 1994, and 1995. For individuals in the force at end of 1993, we determined if that same individual was in the force at the end of 1994 and, if so, counted the individual as retained. Note that this would count an individual who separated and returned in the same year as having been there all year, but this is not thought to be a significant bias. We also do not account for movement of personnel between units in the same branch, since these personnel would be available for service if needed.

Overall retention for personnel in the CA and PSYOP units tracks fairly closely with the experience (about 70 percent) in USAR units in general. As shown in the chart, the retention of linguists tends to be somewhat higher. For both 1994 and 1995, the retention of linguists in duty positions coded as "language required" is ten to twenty percentage points above that for unit personnel overall. We also noted in our analysis that the retention numbers for linguists in the MI units in the USAR are somewhat lower than those in CA and PSYOP. These data would indicate that the retention of RC linguists in the CA and PSYOP units is considerably above that normally seen for reserve component personnel. Next we look at language proficiency.



SIDPERS data for personnel assigned in FY 1995 show that 65 percent of the linguists in CA and 70 percent of those in PSYOP have scores of 1 or better for both listening and reading, but only about 15 percent scored 1 or better in speaking.

This slide shows the cumulative percentage of personnel and their score for listening proficiency. It shows, for both CA and PSYOP, that over 40 percent of the personnel with scores for listening have scores of 2 or better (2 is considered the minimum proficiency standard for linguists in both CA and PSYOP)⁴ and 80 percent have scores of 1 or better. These data would indicate that the personnel are maintaining a reasonable level of proficiency, particularly considering the limited time and training opportunities available. Examination of scores for linguists in the MI branch show somewhat higher scores, with almost 60 percent scoring 2 or better and 90 percent scoring 1 or better. Unlike the case for most linguists in CA and PSYOP, language proficiency for most MI linguists is tied to MOS proficiency, so both the individual soldier and the unit commander have more incentive to emphasize maintenance of language skills. This may indicate that placing greater emphasis on language skills and utilization, though at the expense of competing goals, would lead to better language capability in CA and PSYOP.

⁴Draft Army Regulation 350-xx, 6 October 1995, specifies the minimum proficiency standard for both active and reserve linguists in CA and PSYOP as 2/2/1.

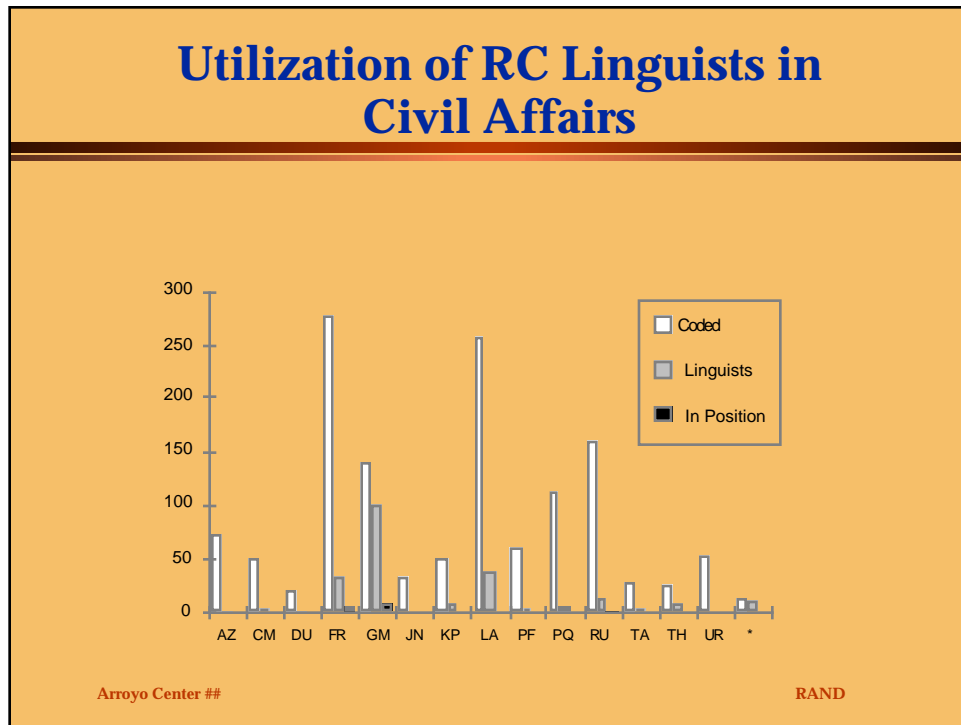
We should note here that these scores may be biased and may indicate a higher level of proficiency than actually exists in the field today. The data in SIDPERS do not provide information about when the test score was recorded and thus probably contain some out-of-date scores. We do not know the extent of this problem. However, we do believe it is a problem and one that must be corrected if the data are to be of benefit in managing this resource.

Demand Exceeds Supply & Few Occupy Position Requiring Their Language		
	Civil Affairs	PSYOP
Language Requirements	1347	987
Trained Linguists	337	201
• In Coded Position	112	146
• In Required Language	12	8
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This slide shows the number of positions coded in SIDPERS as requiring a language skill and the number of trained linguists assigned in FY 1995. Note that less than half of the linguists were assigned to positions coded as language required, and of those only a small handful were assigned to positions requiring their precise language skill.

As a point of comparison and as briefly mentioned earlier, data presented by unit commanders in October 1995 compared the number of language-required positions in each unit to the number of personnel assigned to that unit who had scored 1/1 or better in the past year in a required language. The commanders' data indicated only about 6 to 7 percent of the language-required positions could be filled by personnel with at least a 1/1 proficiency score. Note that this measure does not require the individual to be assigned to the particular position, only to have a language required in the unit. These data are consistent with our results.

Why is there such a shortfall of linguists trained in a language required in their unit, and why so few in positions requiring their particular language skill? To examine this question, we looked at the distribution of language requirements compared to language capability for each of the branches.



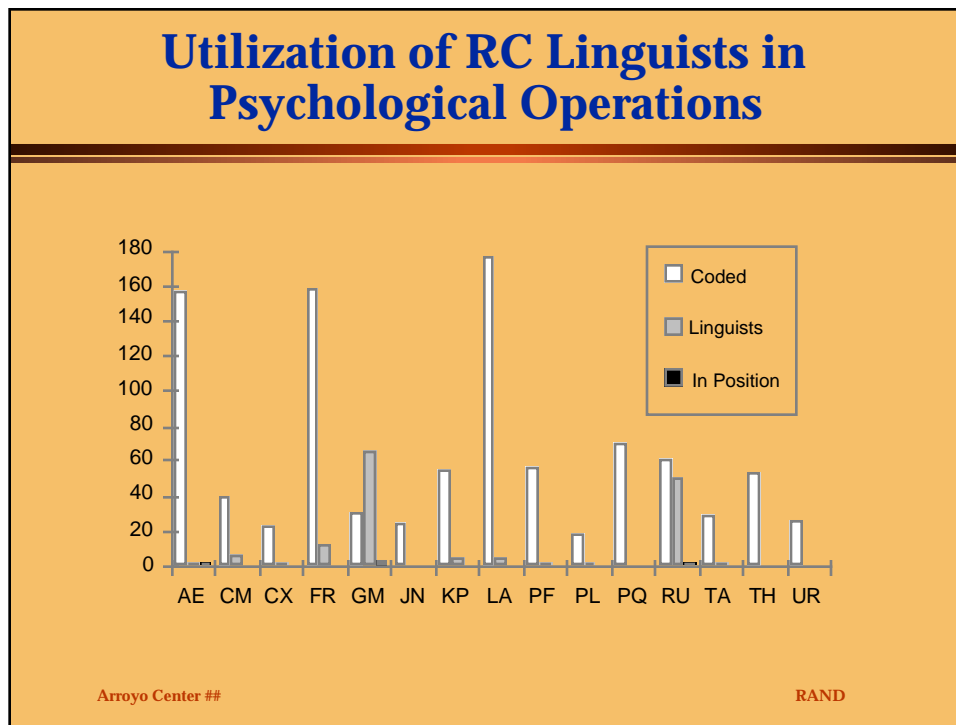
This chart shows for 15 languages the number of positions coded as requiring the language, the number of linguists indicated by SIDPERS data as possessing a proficiency score in the language, and, finally, the number of trained linguists actually assigned to the coded positions. Note first of all that for most languages there are not enough trained linguists to fill the requirement even if all were assigned to the position. Only for German (GM) are the numbers reasonably close. However, even for German, only a very small fraction of the trained linguists are assigned to positions requiring that language. Why is this the case?

There are a number of possible explanations, and some are unique to the RC environment. For example, promotions and job changes within a unit may result in a mismatch between personnel skills and the positions filled. An individual may have been assigned to a linguist position as an E-4 but upon promotion to E-5 finds the assigned E-5 position is not coded for the particular language or perhaps for any language. This situation may have minimal effect on unit capability. If needed, the soldier can still deploy with the unit, and the unit can utilize the language capability.

Also, the geographically limited nature of the RC environment for recruiting and assignment, combined with unit changes, may result in personnel being assigned to a unit that no longer has a need for that particular language. Unlike in the AC, linguists no longer needed in the unit cannot simply be reassigned to another unit with a requirement for that language, nor can the unit simply request assignment of a trained soldier

from elsewhere to the unit to match the new requirements. The result is German linguists in units that need Spanish speakers, and Spanish speakers in units with requirements for Russian linguists. This does not help the unit capability but may be useful to the Army as a whole. Both situations, however, create difficulties in managing the capability and effectively using limited training resources and opportunities.

The next chart shows results for personnel and requirements in PSYOP units similar to those for CA.



The results for PSYOP are similar to those for CA. For many languages, there are simply not enough linguists. There are more than enough personnel to fill the requirements for German (GM) and almost enough for Russian (RU). In neither case, however, are any but a handful actually so assigned. Why is there not a better match?

As in the case of CA, some of the mismatch can be explained by the fact that some personnel with a required language, because of promotion or job change within the unit, may no longer be in a language billet. In other cases, they may not live near a unit needing that language and so may join another unit. This is possibly not a major problem since, if called to active duty, the person could be transferred to where his or her language skills are required. However, why not a better overall match of skills and requirements? Why too many German speakers in PSYOP units, for example?

Might the rapidly changing world events and the resulting change in unit area orientations and mission focus for both CA and PSYOP explain many of these other differences? Comparing the requirements for FY 1993 to those for 1995 does show fairly dramatic changes in both the number of requirements and the mix of languages required.

RC Language Requirements Have Changed in both CA and PSYOP

	Civil Affairs		PSYOP	
	FY93	FY95	FY93	FY95
Arabic	13	75	0	157
Czech	0	0	28	24
Dutch	40	20	0	0
French	25	277	2	159
German	171	140	168	30
Japanese	8	0	0	0
Korean	15	46	24	54
Spanish	11	256	55	176
Persian	18	61	59	57
Portuguese	0	112	1	70
Russian	0	160	225	61
Tagalog	0	29	0	0
Other	150	171	163	199
Total	457	1347	725	987

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The SIDPERS data for FY 1993 through FY 1995 indicate a threefold increase in overall RC language requirements in CA. These requirements increased only slightly from 1993 to 1994 (457 to 500) but then grew to 1,347 in 1995. However, a JFKSWCS briefing indicated a requirement for 1,313 linguists in 1991 in CA, which is fairly close to the FY 1995 number shown above.

In PSYOP units, the requirement grows substantially from 1993 to 1994 (725 to 1,240) and then declines in 1995 to 987. In the JFKSWC briefing noted above, there were 851 requirements for linguists cited for PSYOP in 1991, compared to 987 indicated in SIDPERS for 1995. While the requirements have increased slightly over these years and have fluctuated quite widely in the case of CA, the mix of language skills required has changed even more dramatically.

Civil Affairs has experienced a significant increase in French, Spanish, and Russian. Only the requirements for Dutch and German have declined. For PSYOP units the requirements show both significant increases and decreases. The requirements for German and Russian decline significantly, while those for Arabic and French, and to a lesser extent Portuguese and Spanish, show dramatic increases.

These changes result from at least two somewhat independent events. First, world events have changed the area orientation and mission focus of both CA and PSYOP. Until recently there was no need for Russian speakers

in CA units, since they did not expect to perform their mission with Russian-speaking populations. Now they do. The opposite has occurred in PSYOP, though to a somewhat lesser degree. There are still some Russian language requirements but not nearly as many. Arabic is now in demand in PSYOP.

A second factor has been the decision to focus language training and capability on 16 or 17 major languages. Thus French becomes an important language, not because we expect to go to war in France, but because it is a second language in many parts of the world.

These dramatic changes in the requirements could explain much of the mismatch in language skills possessed by personnel assigned in FY 1995 and the large overall shortfalls in some languages. Changes like these, unless programmed far in advance, are extremely difficult for any organization to accommodate and virtually impossible for reserve component organizations. If all of these requirements are in fact definitive requirements for personnel with language skills in the 2/2 and above range, it will be many years before sufficient personnel can be recruited and trained to match them.

Language Requirements Cut Across Many MOSs					
<u>Civil Affairs</u>			<u>PSYOP</u>		
<u>MOS*</u>	<u>% of MOS</u>	<u>% of all Linguists</u>	<u>MOS*</u>	<u>% of MOS</u>	<u>% of all Linguists</u>
38	33	81	37	77	76
39	62	6	39	77	14
91	33	3	97	78	9
51	52	3	35	15	.4
92	8	2	98	40	.2
17 other MOSs		5			
* There are 68 MOSs in CA units			* There are 61 MOSs in PSYOP units		
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This chart shows that while most of the language requirements concentrate in only a very few MOSs, a few requirements spread across a wide range of MOSs. In CA, for example, 20 percent of all positions are coded with a language requirement. While requirements are spread across 22 of the 68 MOSs in CA units, 87 percent of these requirements are concentrated in just two MOSs (38 and 39). Only 33 percent of all MOS 38 positions are coded with a language requirement, however. In the case of PSYOP units, 30 percent of all positions are coded as requiring a linguist, with the requirements spread across only 5 of 61 MOSs. About three-fourths of the positions in MOS 37, 39, and 97 are coded for linguists. These account for over 99 percent of the linguist requirements in PSYOP units.

These data highlight problems in the coding of individual positions in SIDPERS. Note that for MOS 97, only 78 percent of its positions are coded with a language requirement. Yet this MOS is the interpreter/translator, which requires a language as part of MOS qualification. These and other coding errors indicate a lack of discipline in maintaining correct codes in the personnel system. In part this may be due to the lack of a commonly understood and agreed-on policy with regard to language requirements for CA and PSYOP personnel. It is also the result of responsibility being at the individual unit level, with little oversight. Thus the degree of emphasis on the coding as well as the policy for coding language requirements on individual positions is largely left in the hands of the unit commanders.

Why Require Language Proficiency?

DA Policy gives two reasons

- Primary duty cannot be performed without
- Required for optimum effectiveness

Others see it as needed element of individual training

- Provides general background and cultural awareness
- Serves as recruiting quality screen and incentive

But no uniform policy--driven by unit commanders

Training policy and proficiency expectations likely to differ depending upon rationale

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Draft Army Regulation 611-6 provides two guidelines for identifying requirements for linguists. These are seen at the top of the chart. An example of the first might be someone who must perform interpreter or translator duties. The second might include many of the language requirements for CA and PSYOP specialists who are expected to communicate directly with foreign personnel.

A third rationale came up in various discussions. It was sometimes cited in the context of providing language training as an adjunct to general cultural awareness and appreciation that would create greater knowledge of cultural differences and would be helpful in the soldiers' performance. It would not necessarily improve the soldiers' performance of specific primary duties. Some officials saw requiring language qualification (qualifying score on the Defense Language Aptitude Test) also as a quality screen for new recruits (i.e., personnel who could score well on the DLAT and other required tests were more likely to have higher overall aptitude). In addition, some believe that such a policy would provide a potential recruiting incentive for those desiring language training or the college credits that might result from completing the language training. Note that this latter case might be a two-edged sword, since it would present additional hurdles for the recruiter to overcome. Thus, such a policy might increase recruiting difficulty and manning shortfalls.

More importantly, however, each of these three rationales would likely lead to very different initial training programs, expectations with regard to

proficiency needs, and the degree of emphasis on sustainment training. In the case of someone whose language skills were to be used in the role of an interpreter/translator, a skill level of 2 or better is probably the minimum acceptable level, with many suggesting that attaining and sustaining a 3 is the desirable goal. For the second rationale, attaining a 2 might be perfectly acceptable, and less or possibly even no skill might be deemed an acceptable risk given competing priorities and training opportunities. For the third rationale, it would seem to be sufficient to simply offer the initial training opportunity and accept a minimal skill attainment, with little further effort at sustaining any skill level. Not only do these different rationales exist, the individuals determining language requirements and managing language training and sustainment programs are not always clear which objective they are trying to achieve. This lack of clarity on the specific objective results in a lack of consensus on what training is required and disagreement between elements of the CA and PSYOPS community on the benefits of language training alternatives.

Further complicating the management of requirements and language training, the gaining CINCs have been responsible for setting the proficiency level desired, or required, for personnel deployed to their area of operations. Overlayed on this has been the rapid change in the areas of the world seen as likely deployment locations and thus the languages seen as required, as discussed above. CINCs and unit commanders consider both of these aspects without regard to the effect on demands for training resources. Finally, the increasing constraint on training resources has caused those responsible to give greater thought to where the greatest benefit could be gained for the resources expended. Thus, the number of qualified linguists is the result of three forces, each of which has different objectives and incentives. In the absence of a commonly agreed-on set of objectives, the training programs and personnel policies are unlikely to provide the required capabilities in a cost-effective manner.

Observations and Conclusions

Need review of language requirements for civil affairs and psychological operations (AC and RC)

- Include alternative ways of meeting mission needs
 - specialized language teams and/or training in working through interpreters or language/cultural experts from outside SOF community

Where critical, may require additional resources for training and incentives for RC linguists

- additional training days
- full language proficiency pay
- language qualification a promotion discriminator

Language requirements and proficiency data are not adequate for effective management

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Given the lack of a common understanding and agreement on the reason for language requirements in CA and PSYOP, and the resulting criticality and proficiency levels required, we believe a fundamental review is needed for both the active and reserve elements. This review should address the underlying reason for desiring a language capable individual, the particular language desired, and how critical the skill is to the performance of the unit's mission when deployed. A recent review by one staff element suggests that fewer than 700 linguists are required in the RC elements of CA and PSYOP. What is still needed, however, is an agreement on the linguist requirement by not just the RC element but all elements of the SOF and also by the regional CINCs who would receive the forces in their AOR. The review should incorporate lessons learned from recent operational deployments and the expected circumstances of future employment. It is likely that such a review would reduce the number of requirements for linguists with proficiency at the 2/2 level, though a requirement might remain for training to lower levels where language capability is less critical to mission performance. The latter cases, however, should probably be viewed with cold scrutiny given the limited training dollars available to provide both initial and sustainment training.

One approach to both reducing the total language requirement and facilitating the sustainment of language proficiency, which we understand is currently being pursued by the staff, would be to form language teams in the units. The language team would provide the capability to deploy one or two qualified linguists with each CA or PSYOP element, and allow the training

dollars and management attention to be focused on providing an assured linguist capability with each team, though not every individual member of the team would have the same level. It might also be worth examining the experience in special forces, which have a limited capability in each member of a deploying team but attempt to have at least one or two members at a 2/2 level.

Even if all unit members had some language training, it is highly unlikely, given the varied and unpredictable locations where they might be deployed, that members would always have the correct language or dialect for the deployed location. Recent operations provide ample examples. Thus, it would seem useful to develop and provide training to make more effective use of interpreters and translators, many of whom may come from outside the SOF community. In some cases, it might be effective to provide language and cultural assistance from outside the AOR. Capabilities currently used by police forces, hospital emergency rooms, and others provide examples of how such a capability might function. These are commercially available translation services that are provided on an on-call basis. For example, a bank or emergency room needing to communicate with a foreign speaker dials a central number and is connected to an appropriately qualified linguist who provides translation services in real time via telephone. Similar support should be even easier to provide for OOTW, since the language required would be known before the actual translation service was needed. Qualified linguists could be kept on stand-by if the situation warranted.

Once definitive requirements are determined, it is likely that additional resources will be needed to assure the development and sustainment of adequate language capability in the RC. Only a few additional training days each year focused exclusively on language training would greatly facilitate sustainment and in some cases even increase proficiency. Tank crewmen in the RC typically receive extra drills each year dedicated to training in a simulator. We would argue that it is at least as difficult to maintain foreign language skills as tank gunnery skills. It may also be cost-effective to pay the full language-proficiency pay to RC linguists. It takes just as much time and effort for the RC soldier to maintain skills as it does for the AC soldier. Given the differences in opportunities to deploy to the target country and practice the language, it may be even more difficult for the RC soldier. At present the language-proficiency pay for RC personnel is prorated based on the number of month drills or days of active duty participation. In most cases this means the RC soldier would receive about 13 percent of the monthly amount received by his AC counterpart. Some have suggested the amounts now received do not warrant the time and trouble the necessary paperwork causes. It was also suggested that making language proficiency a promotion discriminator would provide an incentive for soldiers to seek opportunities to obtain and maintain language skills. These steps would be less costly and easier to implement if the review of the language requirements discussed above results in a decision to limit the need for extensive language skills to particular positions or MOSs. As discussed earlier, the scores for MOS 97

and for linguists in MI units indicate that making language skills a “pacing item” may result in higher skill levels. Doing so, however, would require dedicating more time and effort to attaining and maintaining language skills, and that can come only with additional resources, by forgoing other currently required activities, and by waiving some current personnel policies.

As mentioned briefly earlier, changes are needed in the documentation of both language requirements and language-proficiency scores if these data are to contribute to the effective management of personnel and training resources. For example, the SIDPERS system data showed only about 70 percent as many language requirements as reported by USASOC. Only 75% of the positions for MOS 97 were coded with a language requirement. MOS 97 is an interpreter/translator, and language proficiency is required for the MOS. Furthermore, once a language-proficiency code is entered into SIDPERS, it is retained until changed or deleted. There is no requirement for anyone to review the scores to determine if they are still current. A score can be entered when an individual completes a language training course and retained as long as the soldier remains in the service. There is no way that a review of the data in the system can determine when the score was entered. In some cases, the scores are not being updated to reflect later tests. Mechanisms are needed to both permit and facilitate the accurate documentation of the requirements and capability if resources are to be managed in a cost-effective manner.

Bottom Line

Language proficiency for RC is not an impossible task

- retention and proficiency of linguists in FY 94 and 95 pretty good
 - utilization a problem
 - initial training opportunities a problem
- do need
 - a well articulated policy
 - identification and documentation in data systems of language requirements and proficiency
 - adequate resources to train and sustain required linguists
- individual soldier must be convinced the Army thinks language proficiency is important

There is no silver bullet

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This very brief analysis indicates that language proficiency in the RC is not an impossible task. It is not an easy task, but, given the current language requirements, it is one that is necessary if the Army is to provide language trained CA and PSYOP personnel to the regional CINCs in the future.

Our results point to three key items that warrant attention. First, while retention and proficiency of RC linguists in CA and PSYOP units are pretty good, the number of linguists and their utilization pose a problem. The opportunity for initial entry training is evidently a limiting constraint, given the low proportion of the personnel assigned to positions requiring language proficiency who have attended any initial language training. Problems may include not having enough training seats for training at initial entry, individual soldiers not being available for extended training, and confusion over what initial training may be appropriate depending upon the perceived reason for the training.

Second is the need for clearly articulated policy for language requirements in CA and PSYOP, careful and disciplined coding of the requirements in the appropriate documents, and then the focusing of adequate resources to train and sustain the required number of linguists at the required proficiency levels.

Attaining the items in the second point above would go a long way toward the other item that is critical in attaining and maintaining an

adequate number of proficient linguists in the Army. That is to convince the individual soldier that the Army thinks language proficiency is important.

The bottom line is, there is no silver bullet. Although language proficiency in the RC is not an impossible task, there is no single easy way to provide the initial and sustainment training necessary to build a pool of qualified linguists.

Recommendations

Develop and promulgate clear CA and PSYOP mission related objectives for language capabilities

Develop policies and procedures to ensure disciplined coding of language proficiency requirements and capabilities

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While this very brief analysis does not provide an adequate basis for explicit training policy recommendations, it does lead to two recommended actions as first steps to a more effective and efficient language program for CA and PSYOP and as the beginning of an empirical basis for future policy choices. First, there must be a clearly articulated policy for determining language requirements based upon CA and PSYOP mission-related objectives. Language-proficiency requirements by position or function could then be derived based upon these clearly identified and understood mission-related objectives. An explicit tie between the language-proficiency requirements and the mission objectives they are meant to support is key to an effective language needs assessment and the subsequent development of effective and efficient initial and sustainment training programs for languages.

Finally, policies and procedures must be developed to ensure that language-proficiency requirements and personnel capabilities are correctly and promptly reflected in the appropriate data systems. This would provide the information needed to effectively manage language training and utilization of linguists. It would also help to indicate when policy change might be warranted in the future and provide the empirical basis for policy choices.